Am nutrit întotdeauna convingerea că spiritul transilvan - hrănit cu aluviuni diverse și orientat mereu cu fața spre Occidentul european - se caracterizează, în tot ce are autentic, prin toleranță, afirmare liberă a gândului și cuvântului rostit în trei limbi diferite și prin capacitatea de a găsi comprehensiunea reciprocă întru același Cuvânt.

Mircea Zaciu

Ca o imensă scenă TRANSILVANIA...

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ELITA INTERBELICĂ TRANSILVANĂ **RECONFIGURĂRI CULTURALE ȘI IDENTITARE**

CORNEL SIGMIREAN ◆ CORINA MAȘCA
Coordonatori

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Nursing Education in Cluj with Rockefeller Foundation Support, 1924-1948

Sonia D. Andraș*

Introduction

In May 1927, Eugenia Zimita Costres became the inaugural Romanian recipient of a nurse fellowship endorsed by the Rockefeller Foundation. The fellowship, administered through the Foundation's Nurse Division of Medical Education (Nurse DME), enabled Costres to pursue advanced studies in Public Health Nursing across the US and Canada. This initiative was part of a wider programme designed to enhance the School for Visiting Nurses in Cluj, Romania, likely referring to the *Școala de Surori de Ocrotire (The School for Visiting Nurses/Welfare Sisters)*. The program aimed to advanced nursing education in their home country, for which the Foundation had approved fellowships for three nurses from the School of Visiting Nurses[1] in Cluj. Upon her arrival in the United States in late July, Costres undertook extensive training, dividing her time between New York City, Washington D.C., and Providence, Rhode Island. After a year devoted to acquiring expertise abroad, she returned to Romania to accept the dual role of Superintendent of Public Health Nurses and Assistant at Cluj's Public Health Nursing School[2], likely

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[1] For clarity, this paper will use the individual and institution names as they appear in the Rockefeller Foundation records.

[2] *Costres, Mme. Eugenia Zimita*, Fellowship Card (Nurse DME) 27214, Rockefeller Foundation Records, (The Rockefeller Foundation, 1927), Rockefeller Archive Center (SG 10.2/Nursing Travel Grants since 1930, Series 31/Box 23).

referring to the same Visiting Nurses School above[3]. When Costres was granted her fellowship, she was serving as a public health nurse supervisor in Timișoara. Upon her return, she was scheduled to take on her new role in Cluj, combining teaching and nursing practice[4]. Her fellowship card included a 1928 note from Mary Beard (MB), the Associate Director in the Foundation's International Health Division (IHD), that Costres had expressed dissatisfaction with the state of nursing education in Romania[5]. Beard noted that Costres expressed concern regarding male overseas doctors, potentially referring specifically to those of Romanian heritage, who were insufficiently trained in practical nursing, thereby impeding the progress of modern nursing education, as taught through Rockefeller Foundation support, which Beard intended to address[6]. The problem, however, persisted through the interwar era and into the Second World War, serving as a partial explanation for the acute shortage of nurses on the frontlines[7].

This paper analyses Rockefeller-supported nursing education in interwar Cluj as part of a broader study of women's fashion and beauty in connection to hygiene and health, showing how ideals of health and beauty link personal grooming to public health, eugenics, and biopolitical regulation. Specifically, it examines the support provided by the Rockefeller Foundation to women and nursing education institutions in Cluj, Transylvania, from 1924 to 1948. The analysis traces key developments, beginning with the approval of the first Rockefeller grant to a Romanian medical specialist in 1924. It then considers the region's transformation during the consolidation of Greater Romania, as well as the effects of wartime disruptions, changes in national boundaries, and the transition from a monarchy, a war-torn succession of dictatorships, a

[3] For clarity, this paper will use the term "public health nurse" to designate visiting nurses and welfare sisters.

[4] *Costres*, 1.

[5] Ibid, 3.

[6] Mary Beard, *Diary. 1928*, "Interviews", Rockefeller Foundation Records (New York: Rockefeller Foundation, 1928), Rockefeller Archive Center (Officers' Diaries, RG 12/A-E/Beard, Mary), 65.

[7] Grant T. Harward, *Romania's Holy War: Soldiers, Motivation, and the Holocaust* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2021), 230–1.

return to royal control and eventually to the People's Republic of Romania. Special emphasis is placed on Romanian nurses and educators who received Rockefeller Fellowships, particularly those who completed advanced and specialised training in Cluj before the Communist takeover, with its nationalisation policies and subsequent reorganisation of medical education in 1948.

Within the field of nursing promoted by the Rockefeller Foundation, Cluj was recognised alongside Bucharest and Iași as one of three major centres advancing Romanian nursing education. This study explores the various forms of support the Rockefeller Foundation provided to nurses, educators, hospitals, and educational infrastructure in Cluj. By detailing these initiatives, the research highlights the Foundation's crucial role in advancing nursing education in the city. The Foundation continued its involvement despite political changes, administrative modifications, and significant ideological shifts, ending its support only when the new Communist regime in Romania severed official and often personal ties with American individuals and organisations.

The paper also analyses the impact of social prejudices and prevailing attitudes toward women's abilities and roles in medicine, and how those views influenced healthcare policy, focusing on Cluj. This research examines the interactions among international programs, financial aid, and educational opportunities offered by organisations outside Romania, alongside the responses and strategies of local institutions and medical professionals. Through this examination, the paper clarifies how the status and professional identity of nurses in Romania evolved alongside broader shifts in gender relations during times of upheaval and rapid change[8]. The research uses an interdisciplinary approach, drawing from a range of sources, including fellowship documents, detailed reports, personal diaries, and on-site observations by Rockefeller Foundation representatives. These documents are contextualised using interwar

[8] For an outline of the Rockefeller Foundation support in interwar Romania focusing on women fellows in medical fields (doctors and nurses), see Andraș, 'Nurse Between the Lines: Romanian Female Rockefeller Foundation Fellows in Medical Professions in-between Innovation and Suppression', *Anuarul Institutului de Cercetări Socio-Umane »Gheorghe Șincai« al Academiei Române* 28 (2025): 76–113.

Romanian published sources, including books, periodical articles and mentions and official decrees from Romanian national agencies and local sources in Cluj. The research pays special attention to how concepts such as health, beauty, and fashion were incorporated into propaganda that shaped societal perceptions of women's roles. By analysing Cluj's nursing education model, the study demonstrates how these social influences were reflected in specific local practices and beliefs. But before focusing on the particular case of Cluj, a contextualisation of Rockefeller Foundation support is necessary.

More than Grants: Teaching the Educators

Founded to advance global health, the Rockefeller Foundation was a driving force behind the establishment of the School of Hygiene and Public Health at Johns Hopkins University. During the interwar period, the organisation shifted its attention to Eastern Europe, where it prioritised the development of public health systems and the improvement of medical education in Romania[9]. Scouting activities in Romania began likely as early as 1922, and formal engagement was in place soon after that[10]. By 1924, the Foundation had awarded thirteen scholarships to Romanian scholars out of a total of 864 across thirty-three countries. That year, the Division of Medical Education (DME) fellowship awarded to Romanians increased from seven to a peak of seventeen in 1925. From 1923 to 1940, seventy-one Romanian fellows benefited from Foundation support, training in fields from public health to biochemistry[11]. Notably, the Foundation provided material and educational support to several European nursing and public health schools, including the Cluj School for Public Health Nurses and the University of Lyon's School of Nursing. It also awarded fellowships for advanced public health roles. In 1930, five

[9] Cornel Sigmirean and Carmen Andraș, "Negocieri academice româno-americane: Sabin Manuilă în arhivele Fundației Rockefeller", *Anuarul Institutului de Cercetări Socio-Umane «Gheorghe Șincai» al Academiei Române* 25 (2022): (191–210) 192, https://doi.org/10.59277/icsugh.sincai.25.15.

[10] Grigore T. Popa, „Fundația Rockefeller în slujba omenirii", *Universul Literar* 63, no. 9 (1945): (6–8) 6.

[11] Sigmirean and C. Andraș, „Negocieri academice româno-americane", 194–5.

Romanian fellows were selected for these fellowships, matching Hungary and only surpassed by Siam (currently Thailand)[12]. This assistance was intended to professionalise nursing by encouraging secular, standardised, and independent academic institutions, moving away from the eugenic-minded German "motherhouse" system and creating a new group of nurse administrators and educators[13]. These efforts paralleled developments were spearheaded in the United States with direct Rockefeller Foundation support, where the Yale School of Nursing's evolution into a formal academic institution[14].

The establishment of a social and sanitary institute alongside women's societies in interwar Cluj was supported by an initial allocation of 80,000 lei[15] as it was officially registered in 1925. Public health nurses played a central role, with their activities reported to the General Inspectorate starting in 1922 and funded through donations. Reports published between 1931 and 1935 recorded visits to over 1,000 children and about 5,000 total visits by public health nurses, whose responsibilities included monitoring, arranging dowries, and facilitating readoption. The Principele Mircea (Prince Mircea) Society, in this context namely its Cluj branch of the Dispensary for the Protection of Children in Romania, collaborated extensively with public health nurses[16]. According to an article published in May 1929 in the Cluj-based Romanian National Party daily *Patria*, the Society, led by Lucreția Barbu, was praised by an anonymous reporter for its commendable welfare and cultural initiatives in the outskirts of Cluj. Notably, the Society maintained a dispensary for infants in the Mănăștur neighbourhood to assist local Romanian peasants

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[12] *Annual Report 1929*, "Nursing Education. Aids to Schools of Nursing" (New York: The Rockefeller Foundation, 1929), 197–8.

[13] Susanne Kreutzer, "The Rockefeller Foundation and Professionalization of Nursing in West Germany", *Rockefeller Archive Center*, 1 January 2011, 2–3, https://rockarch.issuelab.org/resource/the-rockefeller-foundation-and-professionalization-of-nursing-in-west-germany.html, Accessed 11 December 2025.

[14] *Annual Report 1929*, 201–2.

[15] Around $384 in 1925, amounting to $7,107 and 30,779 RON in 2025.

[16] Ghizela Cosma, 'Instituții de ocrotire socială și sanitară ale societăților de femei din Clujul interbelic', *Banatica* 1, no. 33 (2023): (423–50) 440–1, https://doi.org/10.56177/Banatica.33.1.2023.art.23.

and workers. These charitable activities also included organising cultural conferences and soirées for the same audience, serving as a form of national propaganda. The article highlights a successful soirée for Romanian mothers held at the Mănăștur primary school, where women received advice on their roles as educators of the next generation. Students from the girls' normal school contributed artistically with choir performances and traditional dances, while actors from the National Theatre recited poems. Costres, introduced as an inspector, was among the key speakers who discussed women's roles and responsibilities. She was followed by Doctor Aurel Iancu, who lectured on the causes of infant mortality, with mothers listening attentively. The Society's dedication to nation-building through these cultural and educational activities was recognised, along with hopes that its mission would be adopted in other marginal districts of Cluj[17]. After a temporary suspension in 1932, the Society resumed its activities that same year, with the nurses continuing to collaborate with doctors and other organisations[18]. But these developments also reveal the darker tones of much more sinister intentions linking social work with eugenics.

The social and sanitary institute's connection to eugenics stemmed from the fact that Iuliu Moldovan was the architect of, and later oversaw, the School for Public Health Nurses in Cluj. The intertwining of eugenics, hygiene and politics became increasingly pronounced as hygiene rose to the level of a national priority, an agenda vigorously championed by Moldovan. As one of the principal architects of Romania's public health ideology, Moldovan promoted eugenics as a comprehensive framework for advancing public cleanliness, regulating reproduction and cultivating physical fitness[19]. Romanian eugenicists grounded their vision in eugenic and biopolitical principles, aiming to forge ideological unity and to legitimise state intervention into private conduct and reproductive

[17] Rep., 'Pentru îngrijirea copilului mic — Frumoasă serbare la Mănăștirul Clujului — Activitatea societății „Principele Mircea" —', *Patria*, 16 May 1929, 4.

[18] Cosma, 'Instituții de ocrotire socială și sanitară', 441–2.

[19] Iuliu Moldovan, *Igiena națiunii* (Cluj: Institutul de Igienă și Igienă Socială, Subsecția Eugenică și Biopolitică a Astrei, 1925).

norms[20]. They were both high-ranking members of the Transylvanian Astra Association, dedicated to Romanian literature and culture, where they were particularly involved in its Biopolitics Department[21]. Connecting cosmetics and eugenics, another Cluj-based eugenicist, venereologist, cosmetologist and self-proclaimed fashion and beauty expert, Aurel Voina, framed beauty and femininity as pillars of societal advancement and treated coquetry as a mechanism for racial improvement[22]. He later emphasised this effort as a civic duty that women had to uphold[23]. Beyond his medical, institutional and political roles, Voina was a prominent author of advice literature for women in interwar Romania, addressing both cosmetics (cosmetology) and fashion. Even in its less overtly ideological forms, this type of messaging promoted the ideal of eugenic beauty, which writers defined in terms of health, charm and modesty rather than overt sensuality[24]. The two eugenicists are also connected from a Rockefeller Foundation perspective, as Moldovan had recommended Voina to the Foundation[25]. He left for his IHD fellowship in 1927, and studied medicine and public health, microbiology immunology and bacteriology, natural sciences and biology, zoology and biological research, philosophy, law, tropical medicine in the USA[26]. These texts seemed innocuous, but they linked eugenics to women's morality as both a personal and a national issue, and they revealed the reach of eugenic propaganda and social engineering in domains where women played key roles beyond education and secretarial work, particularly nursing and fashion. Once reformers framed beauty as a

[20] Marius Turda, *Modernism and Eugenics* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 15–16.

[21] Turda, "Romania. Overview," in *The History of East-Central European Eugenics, 1900-1945: Sources and Commentaries*, ed. Turda (London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015), (272–94) 276.

[22] Aurel Voina, *Îngrijirea tenului* (Cugetarea – Georgescu Delafras, 1938), 25.

[23] Aurel Voina, *Igiena – pentru clasa a VIII-a secundară de băieți și fete*, 3rd edn (Cugetarea – Georgescu Delafras, 1941), 20.

[24] Mihail Celerianu, 'Frumusețe și spirit', *Jurnalul Doamnei*, 1 December 1938, 12.

[25] Maria Bucur, *Eugenics and Modernization in Interwar Romania*, ed. Jonathan Harris (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2002), 60–61.

[26] *Voina, Dr. Aurel*, Fellowship Card (IHD) no. 27154, Rockefeller Foundation Records (The Rockefeller Foundation, 1927), Rockefeller Archive Center (SG 10.2/Nursing Travel Grants since 1930, Series 31/Box 23).

matter of health, nursing education was among the fields that assumed responsibility for its cultivation, albeit without explicitly promoting eugenic principles.

Even more, Moldovan was the preeminent advocate and institutional leader of eugenics in interwar Romania, serving as the first professor and director of the Department of Hygiene and Social Hygiene in Cluj from 1919 to 1947[27]. Although he was not formally a Rockefeller fellow, his high-ranking state position established him as a crucial institutional Romanian contact for the Rockefeller Foundation, which ensured that the modern health infrastructure under his influence received strategic US support[28]. In view of the international efforts to professionalise public health[29], Moldovan could benefit by aligning his national hygiene agenda. The expansion of eugenic thought in Greater Romania, in stark contrast to its minimal pre-war presence, became a critical biopolitical tool for national consolidation, drawing on Darwinian and Galtonian principles[30]. This movement was substantially institutionalised in Transylvania at the Cluj School of Social Hygiene under the leadership of Moldovan, which focused on developing a eugenic theory tailored explicitly for the Romanian nation, for the betterment of the so-called "Romanian race", for which women became crucial agents as mothers and carers[31]. Research from Moldovan's school targeted perceived biological threats to the homogeneous national community, such as mixed inter-ethnic marriages in Transylvanian towns, a phenomenon framed as denationalisation and reflecting the nationalist ideology that

[27] Bucur, *Eugenics and Modernization*, 26–27.

[28] Violeta Emilia Plosceanu, 'The Rockefeller Foundation in Romania: For A Crossed History of Social Reform and Science', *Rockefeller Archive Center*, 1 January 2008, (1–8) 7.

[29] Teresa Iacobelli, 'The Women Pioneers of Global Nursing Education Who Built the Rockefeller Foundation Program', *REsource*, 6 January 2022, https://resource.rockarch.org/story/the-women-pioneers-of-global-nursing-education-who-built-the-rockefeller-foundation-program/, accessed 11 December 2025.

[30] Turda, 'Romanian Eugenic Sub-Culture and the Allure of Biopolitics, 1918–39', *Acta Poloniae Historica* 114 (December 2016): 29–58, https://doi.org/10.12775/APH.2016.114.02.

[31] Andraș, *The Women of 'Little Paris': Fashion in Interwar Bucharest* (London, New York and Dublin: Bloomsbury Visual Arts, 2024), 109–11.

regarded the peasantry as the nation's "biological capital"[32]. This ideological drive for racial and social purity justified social control, yet its aims were often softened for public acceptance through commercialised aesthetics, as seen in the popularity of beauty contests between 1929 and 1933 and in mass media. For instance, the magazine *Trup și Suflet (Body and Soul)* was founded and led by Nicolae Vătămanu, a medical historian and chronicler of Bucharest, who, as a public health figure, actively linked interwar fashion and aesthetics with eugenics and biopolitics. This new direction reinforced the still-prevalent interwar notion that fashion constituted one of women's primary interests as highly compatible with radical eugenic ideals of social hygiene[33]. Concurrently, the Rockefeller Foundation, recognising the importance of modern, professional nursing as a bridge between medicine and public welfare in post-Great War Europe[34]. Romania was among the fortuitous candidates for prioritisation. Between 1929 and 1933, the Foundation allocated 10,000 dollars[35] to the so-called Cluj Nursing School, likely also referring to the above-mentioned *Școala de Surori de Ocrotire*, to establish secular, standardised, and autonomous nursing education by 1930[36]. The effective active awarding window for Rockefeller fellowships for Romanian female nurses began in May 1927 with Eugenia Costres[37]. Thus began the story of modern nursing education in Romania.

Breakthrough: The Development of Nursing Education

Beyond the fellowship cards, Rockefeller Foundation officers' visits to Romania, their impressions, comments and efforts represent a valuable source of first-hand information. In early 1926, Frances Elisabeth Crowell (FEC), the Rockefeller Foundation's public health nursing officer visited

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[32] Bucur-Deckard, 'Romania', Database, *Eugenics Archive*, 2025, https://www.eugenicsarchive.ca/around-the-world?id=530ba1c776f0db569b00001c&view=reader, accessed 11 December 2025.

[33] Andraș, *The Women of 'Little Paris'*, 27–29.

[34] Iacobelli, 'The Women Pioneers'.

[35] Calculated for 1933, around 1,170,000 lei, amounting to around $249,212 and 1,080,460 RON in 2025.

[36] Plosceanu, 'The Rockefeller Foundation in Romania', 2.

[37] *Costres*, 1.

Romania for a detailed tour in Bucharest and Cluj of medical, charity institutions and their nursing facilities. In Cluj, accompanied by paediatrician Titu P. Gane, she highlighted deficiencies in the curriculum, particularly the absence of bacteriology, chemistry, and adequate practical and rural experience. She detailed the public health nursing school's two-year program with four semesters, combining foundational and specialised courses, clinical rotations, and extracurricular involvement in public health and creative projects.[38]. Despite the comprehensive curriculum, the inspection revealed gaps, including insufficient tuberculosis training and a shortage of qualified instructors. After touring the newly established institute in Cluj, which included the School for Visiting Nurses, a maternal shelter, a milk kitchen, a "baby dispensary" and an asylum for the blind, she noted that while the latter two were sufficiently equipped and lacked proper facilities for undressing infants or managing their clothing. Eight nurses were assigned to urban service, and the maternal shelter accommodated twenty-five infants and wet nurses under the supervision of two nurses and a housekeeper. She described the nursing school as comprising dormitories, bathing facilities, study rooms, administrative offices, and a dining room shared with blind residents and wet nurses, noting that it had previously occupied a separate building now used as a university residence, where the director continued to live while devoting half of her time to the school. Candidates aged eighteen to forty were admitted under a six-year state service contract, with board and lodging provided, a medical examination required, and a curriculum consisting of two years of combined theoretical and practical instruction[39].

Crowell's diary included a detailed outline of the structure, facilities, schedule, and curriculum of the public health (visiting) nursing school in Cluj. The building contained two dormitories, a washroom and bath, a study room with a smaller adjoining overflow study space, an office for the director, a room for the secretary, and a dining room shared with

[38] Frances Elisabeth Crowell, *Diary. 1926*, "Jan. 26th", (Rockefeller Foundation Records, 1926), Rockefeller Archive Center (Officers' Diaries, RG 12/ A-E/Crowell, F. Elisabeth), 3–4.

[39] Crowell, *Diary. 1926*, "Jan. 28th. Cluj", 4.

blind residents and wet nurses. She noted that the school had previously been housed in a separate building, which was now used as a university student residence with thirty-one rooms. The school's director continued to live there and devoted half of her time to running the school. The age limits for admission ranged from eighteen to forty years. Students received free board and lodging and were required to sign a six-year contract to serve as state functionaries. Admission was conditional upon a medical examination. The study plan consisted of a two-year course combining theory and practice. The first and third semesters ran from October to March and were devoted primarily to practical training. Students worked in children's clinics, outpatient departments, diet kitchens, institutions for abandoned children, and infant consultation services, including dispensary work and group home visits. Practical placements generally took place in the mornings from eight to twelve, except on two days each week when courses began at eleven. Students rotated between institutions every four to six weeks. Theoretical instruction was generally held in the afternoons and amounted to eleven hours per week during the first semester. Subjects included social assistance and the role of the visiting nurse, Romanian language and style, geography, hygiene and social hygiene, anatomy and human physiology taught by the medical faculty, childcare and dietetics, and communicable diseases with disinfection. The second and fourth semesters ran from March to July. During the second semester, practical training took place in children's clinics, maternity wards, surgical clinics, internal medicine departments, sanatoriums, and baby dispensaries. Students worked in groups of eight and rotated every six weeks. Theoretical instruction comprised nine hours per week and covered paediatrics, anatomy and physiology, hygiene and social hygiene, legal concepts and social legislation, as well as tuberculosis and venereal diseases. In the second year, the third semester repeated the practical arrangements of the previous term. Theoretical instruction amounted to eight hours per week and included obstetrics, surgery and first aid, patient care, domestic economy, tuberculosis and venereal diseases with reference to alcoholism, and childcare. In the fourth semester, practical

training followed the pattern of the first semester, with the addition of work in contagious disease clinics and hospitals. Theoretical subjects during this final semester totalled ten hours per week and included obstetrics, sewing, the preparation of trousseaux and layettes, work in nursery schools, physical education applied to children, and singing[40].

She further reported attending a public health conference in Transylvania, where one of the three regional public health "inspectresses" acknowledged deficiencies in the programme and Gane promised a revision. Crowell criticised the absence of preliminary training in bacteriology and chemistry, the lack of practical nursing procedures, insufficient preparation for tuberculosis visitation, limited rural experience, and a shortage of teachers. She also addressed approximately eighty visiting nurses, including thirty five from outside Cluj, and interviewed two about their work, one serving a small town of six thousand inhabitants and the other covering a mountainous district of six villages up to thirty kilometres apart, describing both as competent and trusted by physicians, authorities, and rural communities, and noting that one had recently examined children in two schools and referred several cases to a physician[41]. Her return to Bucharest from Cluj and subsequent visits were reported in the daily *Universul (The Universe)*, noting Gane's involvement in the tours and identifying him as Secretary General of the Public Health Ministry[42]. She concluded her tour on 2 February by boarding the Simplon Express to Belgrade, with plans to continue her journey onward to Paris[43].

By March 1931, Crowell had developed a growing interest in several German communities of nuns in and around Munich who were serving in Central European countries. This development was reported by Doctor Daniel P. O'Brien (D.O'.B.), a Rockefeller Institute physician and medical science administrator who had served as the medical officer for the 1926 Byrd Arctic expedition[44]. He noted that Crowell explicitly cited the

[40] Ibid, 4–5.

[41] Ibid, 6.

[42] 'Ultima oră', *Universul*, 3 February 1926, 5.

[43] Ibid; 'Informațiuni', *Argus*, 3 February 1926, 2.

[44] Special to The New York Times, 'Dr. Daniel P. O'Brien, Physician, Dies', *The New York Times*, 20 August 1958, 27.

University Clinics in Cluj as one such example and suggested that this interest was part of a strategic initiative to enable one of these communities to establish a modern training school for its own members[45]. Two months later, Crowell documented a visit to a district near Iași, where an extended discussion with public health pioneer Dr Ion Alexa focused on the performance of public health nurses. Alexa was married to a former DME Rockefeller fellow, Dr Eugenia Manoliu, who specialised in immunology and infectious diseases and studied bacteriology and tuberculosis in the USA and France between 1926 and 1927 as a Rockefeller fellow[46]. In 1930 Manoliu became acting-Chief Physician in Hygiene at the University of Iași, a temporary promotion from her position as laboratory assistant[47]. By the end of the year, she was confirmed in her new role[48].

Back to Crowell's May 1931 visit, she noted that Alexa strongly criticised four nurses trained at the Cluj school for their perceived lack of initiative and for failing to meet their monthly quota of home visits to babies. Consequently, he had them relieved of consultation duties so that they could concentrate on studying infant mortality during the first three months of life. Crowell concluded that although Alexa's standards were appropriate, it was unfair to compare these pioneering graduates of a nascent school with those from the established institutions of the United States of America. She determined that the genuine requirement was a skilled supervising nurse of the calibre of Anny Lambrino. The entry ended with a note on the poor living conditions of one nurse, specifically the absence of a latrine, and on the initiation of fellowship proceedings for Lambrino together with Dr Eugenia Popa[49]. While a licensed medical doctor at the University of Iași herself, Popa moved on to become the

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[45] Crowell, *Diary. 1931*, "Wednesday, March 11th, 1931", (Rockefeller Foundation Records, 1931), Rockefeller Archive Center (Officers' Diaries, RG 12/ A-E/Crowell, F. Elisabeth), 42.

[46] *Manoliu, Dr. Eugenia M.D.*, Fellowship Card (DME) no. 26082, (Rockefeller Foundation Records, 1926), Rockefeller Archive Center (SG 10.2, Nursing Travel Grants since 1930, Series 31, Box 23).

[47] The Kingdom of Romania, 'Deciziuni ministeriale', *Monitorul Oficial, Partea 1*, no. 39 (February 1930): (1407–12) 1412.

[48] 'Medici ieșeni definitivați în posturi', *Opinia*, 4 December 1930, 2.

[49] Crowell, *Diary. 1931*, "Wednesday, May 13th, 1931 (Cont'd)", 90.

director of the nursing school in Bucharest and received a IHD Nursing grant between 1934 and 1936, studying nursing education in the US and Canada[50]. Conversely, Crowell's insistence of addressing her as Doctor Popa in her diaries is a divergence from most references, including her fellowship card, using "Miss" Popa instead of her earned doctor title[51]. But Popa was already known in Romania as a doctor. After gaining her medical doctor license in 1923, she aligned herself, albeit quietly, against antisemitism. After an unidentified assailant fired four shots into the Cluj home of Professor Iacob Iacobovici, the Rector of the University of Cluj, on 22 May 1923, the Cluj academic community regarded the act as a symbolic attack on the university rather than a personal vendetta and responded with clear solidarity. Popa was a signatory to the open letter of 28 May, in which the medical staff of Cluj expressed their outrage at the attack on the Rector and reaffirmed their respect for his leadership and his contribution to the development of Romanian academic and medical life[52]. She worked first as an assistant and later as a senior physician across Transylvania and Moldavia in the 1920s, and was eventually appointed, by order of the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, as director of the public health nursing school in Iași, effective 1 November 1929[53].

Back to Crowell's visit, she then left for Bucharest from Iași, where she received a telephone call from Smaranda Botez, head public health nurse in Iași, to discuss her Rockefeller fellowship application. Crowell explained that she could not recommend Botez for a fellowship because she was not affiliated with a government body or with a nursing project in which the Rockefeller Foundation was involved. Botez also expressed regret that she had been unable to obtain a post for herself in either Cluj or Iași, noting that there was no budget allocation for her. She had

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[50] *Popa, Miss/Dr. Eugenia (Diploma in Medicine, Faculty of Medicine in Jassy and Cluj)*, Fellowship Card (IHD Nursing) no. 27154, (Rockefeller Foundation Records, 1936), Rockefeller Archive Center (SG 10.2/Nursing Travel Grants since 1930, Series 31/Box 23).

[51] For a contextualisation, detailed overview of Eugenia Popa's fellowship and comparison to another medical doctor, Aurel Voina, see Andraș, *The Women of 'Little Paris'*, 106–7.

[52] 'Un atentat în contra rectorului dr. Iacobovici', *Gazeta Transilvaniei*, 24 May 1923, 3.

[53] The Kingdom of Romania, 'Deciziuni ministeriale', *Monitorul Oficial, Partea 1*, no. 231 (October 1929): (7941–3) 7943.

previously declined a post in Iași because of ill health but was now recovering and felt she would be able to work within a month, although the position was already filled. Crowell suggested that she might propose a temporary appointment for Botez to bacteriologist Alexandru Slătineanu, then general secretary under Health Minister Ioan Cantacuzino, potentially substituting for Anny Lambrino as chief assistant, if she left on a fellowship, an opportunity that greatly interested Madame Botez. Crowell promised to telephone Botez if she could arrange an appointment with Slătineanu[54]. On the other hand, in June, Lambrino's fellowship was approved, and began in September to begin a one-year program in public health nursing and school organisation and teaching methods in the US and Canada[55].

Crowell headed to Cluj and immediately met with nurse Maria Pertia to request aid in renovating a special unit at the Paediatric Clinic, which Titu Gane had reserved for student nurses under the supervision of Valeria Tarina[56]. In 1929, Tarina had received a Rockefeller fellowship and studied paediatric nursing for one year at the Kinderklinik (Children's Clinic) in Vienna[57]. Crowell agreed in principle to the request, on the condition that the funds come from the 10,000 dollars[58] appropriated for the school's teaching facilities and that the budget for rearranging the school itself be reduced accordingly. Pertia added that a raffle was held to raise money to acquire the entire building, but she still lacked official information on the total amount collected or the share earmarked for relocating the association occupying the ground floor. Crowell then visited the Paediatric Clinic to discuss structural changes to the project with Gane, who welcomed her suggestions and supported maintaining the small basic unit, which offered valuable opportunities

[54] Crowell, *Diary. 1931*, "Thursday, May 14th, 1931", 90.

[55] *Lambrino, Miss Anny*, Fellowship Card (IHD Nursing) no. 31298, (Rockefeller Foundation Records, 1931), Rockefeller Archive Center (SG 10.2/Nursing Travel Grants since 1930, Series 31/Box 23).

[56] Crowell, *Diary. 1931*, "Friday, May 15th, 1931", 91.

[57] *Tarina, Miss Valeria*, Fellowship Card (MS Nursing) no. 29226, (Rockefeller Foundation Records, 1936), Rockefeller Archive Center (SG 10.2/Nursing Travel Grants since 1930, Series 31/Box 23).

[58] Around 1,680,000 lei in 1931, amounting to around $213,142 and around 923,801 RON.

for student nurses. Crowell promised to secure a letter from Alexandru Slătineanu to the Ministry on the revised project and final budget. She then visited the Obstetrical Clinic and met Chief Professor Cristea Grigoriu, then Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, along with student nurse Anna Lucia Cumpata[59]. In 1929, Cumpata held a one-year Rockefeller fellowship to study obstetrical nursing at University College Hospital in London[60].

In Cluj, Crowell discussed the fifteen infants under the care of Cumpata and Costres in Iași and agreed to consider an additional 100 dollars for clinic supplies. Pertia requested a study trip for Maria Criste, explaining that Criste did excellent work but needed some brushing up, while Maria Secrier contributed to practical teaching[61]. Secrier, a recent Medical Sciences (MS) Nursing fellow, studied Nursing Education and nursing school organisation in Warsaw and Paris[62]. Criste held a Nurse DME fellowship in 1927–1928 to study hospital organisation and training school methods in the UK, and the following year she would receive a shorter fellowship to study the organisation and administration of schools of nursing across medical centres across Europe[63]. Crowell ended her entry by noting that Dr Mihail Zolog later visited her to discuss the Bilan project and voiced greater satisfaction with the nurses' work than with the doctors', which contrasted positively with the strictures she had heard in Iași. They also reviewed the organisation of the Ministry of Labour, Public Health and Public Welfare[64]. Zolog was himself a former Rockefeller DME fellow between 1925 and 1926, studying Hygiene in the USA[65].

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[59] Crowell, *Diary. 1931*, "Friday, May 15th, 1931 (Cont'd)", 92–93.

[60] *Cumpata, Miss Anna Lucia*, Fellowship Card (MS Nursing) no. 29224, (Rockefeller Foundation Records, 1936), Rockefeller Archive Center (SG 10.2/Nursing Travel Grants since 1930, Series 31/Box 23).

[61] Crowell, *Diary. 1931*, 92.

[62] *Secrier, Miss Maria*, Fellowship Card (MS Nursing) no. 29225, (Rockefeller Foundation Records, 1936), Rockefeller Archive Center (SG 10.2/Nursing Travel Grants since 1930, Series 31/Box 23).

[63] *Criste, Miss Maria*, Fellowship Card (MS Nursing) no. 32283, (Rockefeller Foundation Records, 1936), Rockefeller Archive Center (SG 10.2/Nursing Travel Grants since 1930, Series 31/Box 23).

[64] Crowell, *Diary. 1931*, 91.

[65] *Zolog, Dr. Mihail (M.D.)*, Fellowship Card (DME) no. 25078, (Rockefeller Foundation Records, 1925), Rockefeller Archive Center (RG 10/SG 10.2/Fellowship recorder cards, Subgrp 2/Nursing Travel Grants Since 1930, Series 31).

Crowell's diary included a detailed outline of educational and institutional organisational structures. She explained that the school of social work in Cluj operated under the direct supervision of this department, which was responsible for several specific areas of social services. These areas included services for mothers and children, support for war orphans and people with disabilities, the management of individuals classified as "mentally defective and insane", the administration of public assistance, and the oversight of schools. She presented a diagram of the Ministry of Labour, Public Health and Public Welfare as of May 1931, showing its two main secretariats. One for labour and one for health and welfare. The Labour Secretariat was headed by the Director of Labour, hygienist and eugenicist Gheorghe Banu. The Health and Welfare Secretariat oversaw two branches, a health branch led by a Director of Health, Alexandru Slătineanu, who supervised three Institutes of Hygiene, and a welfare branch administered by a Director of Welfare, supported by an Assistant Director, Christine Galitzi, under whom four nursing schools and a postgraduate school of social work operated[66]. Galitzi was also a former Sociology and Social Work (SS) division Rockefeller fellow, with a License, Master and PhD in Sociology from Columbia University. She obtained her fellowship for the latter, between 1926 and 1929, studying Social Legislation, Statistics and Population Problems[67]. Below the diagram, Crowell mentioned that Galitzi had been in Cluj for a fortnight, giving lectures on social work to medical students at the Institute of Hygiene and teaching at the nursing school. Crowell also noted that during discussions about the school in Iasi, Criste spent six weeks there, and Costres four weeks, assisting Popa with the initial group's preliminary course in late 1929. She also mentioned that everyone involved valued Popa's accomplishments. Crowell provided a description of Romania's geographic organisation and its application to health initiatives. She explained that the country

[66] Crowell, *Diary. 1931*, 92.

[67] *Galitzi, Christine (Miss) (B.A., Paris, 1922; M.A., Columbia, 1924; Ph.D., Columbia, 1929)*, Fellowship Card (SS) no. 26051, (Rockefeller Foundation Records, 1926), Rockefeller Archive Center (SG 10.2/Fellowship recorder cards, Subgrp 2/Humanities Fellows, Series 5/Romania).

was divided into seven administrative regions, each headed by a General Inspector. These inspectors supervised three directors responsible for labour, health, and welfare, and in areas with more than five nurses, an additional inspector was appointed. She listed the regions and their capitals as Wallachia (Bucharest), Transylvania (Cluj), Moldavia (Iași), Banat (Timișoara), Bessarabia (Kishinev), Oltenia (Craiova), and Bucovina (Chernivtsi)[68].

But Crowell was among several Rockefeller Foundation officers who frequently visited Romania. Mary Beard (MB), Associate Director of the Rockefeller Foundation's International Health Division (IHD), reported on her visit to Cluj at the same time with Crowell, in February 1932, during which she inspected a nursing school, affiliated clinics, and the central office of public health nurses. She highlighted the contributions of key figures, including Elise Bucsan and Iuliu Moldovan, to the development of Romanian public health nursing. Beard noted that the Cluj school already had around two hundred public health nurse alumnae and argued that Romania's regional and ethnic diversity required dedicated schools in Iași, Bucharest, and Cluj[69]. The following day, in a snowstorm, she travelled by sleigh to the Gilău rural health centre through wolf-haunted hills and observing vivid details of the landscape, traditional peasant life, and transport by bullocks and water buffalo. She concluded by emphasising the severity of rural poverty[70].

At the Gilău health centre, she observed that, despite the snow keeping the paediatrician away, some mothers still came in, marking the first time she had seen a system of state medicine in operation. A "conscription" doctor attended to the "sick poor," performed dentistry, and made home visits. The centre's staff included a Medical Director, a paediatrician from Cluj, a tuberculosis specialist, a conscription doctor, a Secretary, a Sanitary Inspector, a Public Health Nurse Director, three assistants, and four student nurses, with services steadily expanding.

[68] Crowell, *Diary. 1931*, "Friday, May 15th, 1931 (Cont'd)", 92.

[69] Mary Beard, *Diary. 1932*, "Wednesday, February 10, 1952", (Rockefeller Foundation Records, 1932), Rockefeller Archive Center (Officers' Diaries, RG 12/ A-E/Beard, Mary), 14.

[70] Beard, *Diary. 1932*. "Thursday, February 11, 1932", 14.

Returning to Cluj, she and her companions had tea at the Cluj nursing school and met two women from the Jassy School of Nursing who had travelled 14 hours to seek her advice. She highlighted Doctor Popa, the "attractive young woman" and head of the Iași nursing school, and Smaranda Botez, a Paris graduate and Popa's assistant, who planned to spend a week in Cluj learning about health centres from Crowell. She then mentioned Smaranda Botez, who was away on her first fellowship under the IHD Nursing division, doing hospital work while studying Public Health Nursing in the US and Canada[71]. Beard regarded Botez's plans as a good example of her value as an adviser in a public health nursing organisation, but concluded that, despite her strong academic background, her lack of practical experience meant she would learn best by observing Crowell teach another nursing fellow Elise Bucsan, from Cluj. Bucsan was a Medical Sciences (MS) Nursing fellow, who had completed her own Public Health Nursing studies in 1931, also in the USA and Canada[72]. At the institutional level, Beard observed that the Cluj School of Nursing had no governing committee. Its Director reported directly to the Minister of Hygiene and Social Welfare, and its funding came from the Central Bureau in Bucharest. She also noted that Cluj was entirely Hungarian in character, reflecting Hungary's long possession of Transylvania, even though the University's faculty was Romanian rather than Hungarian. After tea, she and her companions took the night train to Budapest[73].

Around the same time as Beard, Crowell followed a similar route in her inspection of the Cluj facilities. She recorded that her arrival in Cluj was efficiently organised by Maria Pertia and Elise Bucsan, who immediately brought her to the school and its associated clinical and public health services. She observed an active institutional environment

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[71] *Botez, Mrs. Smaranda*, Fellowship Card (IHD Nursing) no. 32282 (Rockefeller Foundation Records, 1932), Rockefeller Archive Center (SG 10.2/Nursing Travel Grants since 1930, Series 31/Box 23).

[72] *Bucsan, Mrs. Elise*, Fellowship Card (MS Nursing) no. 29222 (Rockefeller Foundation Records, 1929), Rockefeller Archive Center (SG 10.2/Nursing Travel Grants since 1930, Series 31/Box 23).

[73] Beard, *Diary. 1932*, "Thursday, February 11, 1932 (cont.)", 15.

in which students were already integrated into practical work under Bucsan's supervision. Her morning was spent on administrative tasks before she met Eugenia Popa and Smaranda Botez, who had travelled from Iași after being informed of the visit. Crowell noted that Botez appeared healthier, more confident and eager to learn and that the discussions revealed ongoing structural and organisational difficulties at the Iași school. Popa expressed her readiness to continue her work in Cluj, provided her responsibilities were clearly defined between the hospital and the Ministry, and she emphasised that she did not wish to displace any colleague, with an implicit reference to Anny Lambrino. Later, after returning from Gilău, Crowell planned for Botez to accompany her in the coming days to work on records with Bucsan and to revisit Gilău. She intended to consult the Rockefeller Foundation's international health director, George King Strode (GKS), regarding a promised study trip for Botez and to arrange a similar opportunity for Maria Criste once Pertia confirmed her availability. Crowell closed the entry with the impression of a full and productive day marked by institutional visits, personnel assessments and strategic planning for the development of nursing education[74]. By the end of the month, Crowell had travelled throughout Hungary and Serbia and arrived in Italy on 26 February. Three days later, she travelled with Mary Beard to Terracina, where they visited Mary Elizabeth Tennant (MET), the Rockefeller Foundation's nursing program officer, who was convalescing and temporarily unable to travel on medical advice. Crowell used the occasion to review Tennant's recent work in Cluj, noting that Botez had made a powerful professional impression and was regarded as an exceptionally strong fellowship candidate. She observed that Dr Zolog in Cluj was particularly eager to secure Botez's involvement, while Bucsan was described as not yet fully established and in need of guidance and structured support. Crowell also noted that Popa intended to press for a definitive decision regarding her appointment to the school upon her return. She added that Strode had

[74] Crowell, *Diary. 1932*, "Wednesday, February 10th, 1932", "Thursday, February 11th, 1932" (Rockefeller Foundation Records, 1932), Rockefeller Archive Center (Officers' Diaries, RG 12/ A-E/Crowell, F. Elisabeth), 15.

approved a short period of recuperation for Tennant, allowing her to regain her strength before resuming travel and professional duties[75].

On 15 March 1932, Crowell recorded that a nursing fellowship had been awarded to Maria Criste, who was then an instructor at the School for Nurses in Cluj. Strode also added a note stating that a letter indicated that Smaranda Botez, a candidate for a Rockefeller-funded travel-study trip, would probably be transferred from Iași to Gilău. If this occurred, Crowell would be able to supervise Botez's travel-study directly, as the post would relate to the field training of students from the public health nursing school in Cluj[76]. The diary also mentioned Anny Lambrino's enthusiasm for her experience and noted that, after learning about Crowell's Cluj visits with cautious references to Popa and Botez and the fact that Alexandru Slătineanu was keeping Popa at the Iași school without any firm guarantee, Lambrino expressed her intention to return[77].

Despite both acknowledged and unacknowledged obstacles to introducing modern nursing education and practice in Romania, the authorities nonetheless recognised the efforts of Rockefeller Foundation officers, including Crowell. In 1935, she returned to Romania and met with the Minister of Health, Dr Costinescu, and Dr Gane, still Secretary General, to discuss matters concerning visiting nurses[78]. As according to her fellowship card, Costres had moved to Iași in March 1934 after returning to Timișoara in 1931, it is safe to assume the situation or incident that caused her displeasure occurred sometime between 1930 and 1931. But tensions between nurses themselves were eclipsed by the fraught relationship between them and higher-ranking men, either doctors, civil servants or policy makers. Rockefeller Foundation nursing fellowship records did not explicitly address eugenics, at least for women fellows, but consistently prioritised public health education and practice. In June 1937, George Strode mentioned a disagreement between Eugenia Popa, who advocated strategic planning and rigorous and high-quality

[75] Ibid, "Monday, February 29th, 1932", 24.
[76] Ibid, "Tuesday, March 15th, 1932", 27–28.
[77] Ibid, "Friday, April 1st, 1932", 31.
[78] 'Informațiuni', *Facla*, 24 August 1935, 3.

training, and the Minister of Health, Gheorghe Banu, who favoured the rapid expansion of the Regina Maria Nursing School in Bucharest. In the following spring, Strode recorded that Elisabeth Crowell expressed satisfaction with the school and with the Minister of Health General Nicolae Marinescu, while observing that the Dean, Dumitru Mezincescu, had failed to resolve concerns over the Health Centre's location despite municipal funding[79]. This is especially poignant because his son, Mircea Mezincescu, was also at the time pursuing his IHD Rockefeller fellowship in biochemistry[80]. Progress was slow, but efforts did pay off. By April 1935, due to her exceptional skills, experience and knowledge, Eugenia Costres was finally appointed supervisor of all nurses working in Iași[81]. In August 1937, Crowell returned to the Ministry of Health and met again with the two officials to discuss the ongoing construction of the Institute for Protection Sisters, financed by the Romanian Government with Rockefeller Foundation support[82].

Crowell travelled again to Cluj in early 1936. She began by recounting her arrival there, where she met Maria Pertia, now a former fellow. In February 1935, Pertia had completed her program under the Nurse Visitor Division, during which she studied nursing school organisation and conducted visits in the USA and Canada[83]. She highlighted the conflict between Pertia and Elise Bucsan, then director of the nursing school. Pertia characterised Bucsan's illness and request for sick leave as feigned. Crowell had urged Pertia to remain through March to secure her position and intervened in relation to Bucsan's condition,

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[79] George King Strode, *Diary. 1937*, "Rumania", (New York: Rockefeller Foundation Records, 1937), Rockefeller Archive Center (Rockefeller Foundation Records, Officers' Diaries, RG 12/S–Z/Strode, George King), 94.

[80] *Mezincescu, Dr. Mircea D. (B.S. 1921, Liceul Național, Jassy; M.S. 1925, Univ. of Jassy, Doctor of Science, Univ. of Strasbourg, 1934 France)*, Fellowship Card (IHD) no. 35139, (Rockefeller Foundation Records, 1936), Rockefeller Archive Center (SG 10.2/Nursing Travel Grants since 1930/Series 31/Box 23).

[81] *Costres*, 4.

[82] 'Știrile zilei', *Neamul Românesc*, 19 August 1937, 2; 'Informațiuni', *Argus*, 20 August 1937, 3.

[83] *Pertia, Madame Maria*, Fellowship Card (Nursing Visitor), (Rockefeller Foundation Records, 1929), Rockefeller Archive Center (SG 10.2, Fellowship recorder cards, Subgrp 2/Nursing Visitors, Series 28).

describing her as hypersensitive and deeply wounded by Pertia's attitude. Crowell concluded that the two women were incompatible. While Pertia wanted Bucsan to stay, Bucsan wished to leave, and her current overwrought nervous state required rest and a change of environment. A substantial portion of Crowell's time was devoted to addressing the centre in Cluj's severe financial difficulties, which threatened closure by 1 April due to lack of funds and ministerial arrears. She detailed the complicated budget situation: the 1935 allocation had been reduced, and only 116,000 lei of the final 470,000 lei[84] had been paid, with nothing paid for 1936. She reported that Dr Zolog was particularly anxious about the 1935 figures and had written to and visited Titu Gane without success, while money earmarked for hygiene and sanitation was tied up in the centralisation scheme[85].

Crowell also referred to a second request for 200,000 lei[86] to purchase the apartment of the Salvaria director, who was willing to move if suitable alternative accommodation could be found. She noted several less crucial administrative matters as well. She submitted a request for an Organisation for Rural Service (ORS) nursing fellowship for a capable but inexperienced candidate and reported that two similar fellowships had already been granted, suggesting that the needs of Eugenia Costres and Bucsan should also be considered, given the scarcity of fellowships and the demands of new nursing projects. She also gave the reason for Costres' relocation to Timișoara, noting that she "was dissatisfied and left", without further details. She mentioned that a Ministry order issued in December had halted all immunisation procedures unless explicit permission was obtained from the Ministry first. Iuliu Moldovan, who came for tea, confirmed that he understood Crowell's position on the proposal to rent an apartment for the Salvaria director[87]. The report

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[84] Around $1,105 out of $4,476 in 1935, amounting to around $26,125 out of $105,852, around 113,193 RON out of 458,627 RON in 2025.

[85] Crowell, *Diary. 1936*, "Friday, January 31st, 1936", Rockefeller Foundation Records (Rockefeller Foundation, 1936), Rockefeller Archive Center (Officers' Diaries, RG 12, RG 12, A-E, Crowell, F. Elisabeth), 17–18.

[86] Around $1471, amounting to around $34,289 and around 148,562 RON in 2025.

[87] Crowell, *Diary. 1936*, "Friday, January 31st", 17.

concluded with a brief entry stating that Crowell drove out from Cluj with Maria Criste, Dr Zolog, and Pertia to discuss registration methods and to obtain sample forms and figures on dental work for schoolchildren to send to Dumitru Mezincescu, director of the Institute of Hygiene and Public Health in Bucharest[88]. The last two approved fellowships involving transatlantic travel were two IHD Nursing fellowships to study public health nursing un the US, both approved on the same day in June 1937, for Maria Moiseev[89] and Alexandrina Ionescu[90], both affiliated with the "Regina Maria" nursing school in Bucharest. The same day the Foundation approved a second IHD Nursing grant for then-head nurse of the Bucharest Health Centre, Smaranda Botez, for overseeing nursing activities in Paris and Athens[91]. The official end of the last fellowship in late August 1938, when Moiseev and Ionescu sailed back to Europe[92]. But the Rockefeller support for modern nursing education in Romania did not end here.

Seasons of Care: Nursing Education during the Second World War and Beyond

Despite the curtailing of awarded nursing fellowships, Rockefeller officers continued to visit Romania regularly and to meet with Romanian authorities. While mitigation measures from Romania's authorities were more promises than action, Elisabeth Crowell's efforts were still officially recognised. On 8 March 1939, the Ministry of Health and Social Assistance awarded the "Meritul Sanitar" (Sanitary Merit) Cross, First Class, to several individuals who excelled in the sanitary initiatives of August and September 1938. Among the recipients was Manole Enescu,

[88] Ibid, 18.

[89] *Moiseev, Miss Maria (or Miss Maria Moiseiv) (Bachelor's Degree & Graduate of Bucarest Sch. Nursing, 1935)*, Fellowship Card (IHD Nursing) no. 37234, (Rockefeller Foundation Records, 1937), Rockefeller Archive Center (SG 10.2/Nursing Travel Grants since 1930, Series 31/Box 23), 1.

[90] *Ionescu, Miss Alexandrina (Graduate,1930, School of Nursing, Jassy)*, Fellowship Card (IHD Nursing) no. 37233, (Rockefeller Foundation Records, 1937), Rockefeller Archive Center (SG 10.2/Nursing Travel Grants since 1930, Series 31/Box 23).

[91] *Botez*, 3.

[92] *Moiseev*, 2. *Ionescu*, 2.

Prefect of Cluj County. Other medical professionals linked to Cluj included Drs. Iacob Câmpianu and Josan Radu, and on the Rockefeller Foundation side, Elisabeth Crowell herself[93]. By late December 1939, Eugenia Costres was elected Vice-President of the Association of Welfare Sisters of Romania, with its headquarters in Cluj, during the general assembly held on 27 and 28 December 1939. As seen in the 29 March 1940 announcement in the Kingdom of Romania's *Monitorul Oficial* (*Official Gazette*), also noted that all elected members of the committee, were public health nurses and Romanian citizens[94]. This brief note betrays the social-political context of the era, hiding under a message of traditionalism and nationalism messaging blending xenophobia, antisemitism and anti-feminism into a fertile ground for the later Holocaust. This occurred the height of the interwar Romanianisation measures, which eventually led in 1940 to the National Legionary State's brief but extremely violent rule under the Iron Guard, the political wing of the Legion of Saint Michael, an extreme-right-wing militant organisation at the height of its power, which was especially visible in the tone and expectations towards women and their role[95]. This moment marked the violent beginning of the end of King Carol II's Royal Dictatorship after five-odd decades of parliamentary democracy[96]. This upturn was created after the Vienna Award of 30 August 1940, Ion Antonescu took power and formed a national legionary state on the ruins of the royal regime augmented by territorial losses and growing political opposition following the French occupation[97]. The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of August 1939 had already placed Bessarabia under Soviet influence. In June 1940, Romania was forced to cede Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina, leading to the evacuation of nearly one million people. Northern Transylvania and Southern Dobruja were lost soon afterwards.

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[93] Regatul României, 'Ministerul Sănătății și Asistenței Sociale. Meritul Sanitar clasa I', *Monitorul Oficial Partea I Aprilie 1939* 107, no. 78 (1939): (2043–5) 2043.

[94] Regatul României, 'Tribunalul Cluj, secția I', *Monitorul Oficial*, no. 76 (29 March 1940): 2727.

[95] Andraș, *The Women of 'Little Paris'*, 21–23.

[96] Keith Hitchins, *A Concise History of Romania* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 168.

[97] Florin Müller, *Statul national-legionar (septembrie 1940 – ianuarie 1941)* (Bucharest: Corint, 2025), 32.

On 4 September 1940, Carol II abdicated in favour of his son, Michael I After the political collapse and territorial losses of 1940, Romania aligned with Nazi Germany under the National Legionary State, whose militant and paramilitary core was called the Iron Guard. The Legion promoted ultranationalism, Orthodox mysticism, antisemitism and anti-communism, while the Iron Guard became the movement's militant core and most widely used name. Despite the use of "Legionary State", General Ion Antonescu held real military and executive power, while the Legion and Iron Guard provided ideological legitimacy and mass mobilisation, seeking German support to stabilise the regime and reverse Romania's recent losses. Romania joined the Axis by signing the Tripartite Pact in November 1940, allowing German troops to be stationed on its territory and marking a final break with the Allies. As a result, Romania went to war with Great Britain later that year and, after the United States entered the conflict, extended hostilities to the United States as well, confirming its full commitment to the Axis[98].

In early 1944, Costres was confirmed as head of Public Health Nursing Institute in Iași, mentioned in the Bucharest daily *Universul (The Universe)* among local notable individuals attending religious events[99]. She was also cited as heavily involved in wartime charitable work. For instance, the same newspaper included an article noting her pleas for donations of books and periodicals for wounded soldiers in hospitals, underlining the need for creating dedicated boxes throughout Iași[100]. The final notes from her Rockefeller Foundation fellowship card indicate that the nursing school in Iași, likely the Institute mentioned above, faced significant challenges in the following years[101]. A year after her *Universul* mentions, Costres reported that her school had been bombed and evacuated, and the work was being relocated to an unnamed city. Given that the Cluj nursing school was also relocated to Arad towards the

[98] Hitchins, *A Concise History of Romania*, 198–9; *Rumania, 1866-1947* (Oxford and New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1994), 455–74.

[99] 'La Iași', *Universul*, 11 January 1944, 8.

[100] 'Dăruiți cărți, reviste și ziare ostașilor răniți din spitale. Nevoile înființării unor cutii pe străzile orașului Iași', *Universul*, 13 January 1944, 2.

[101] *Costres*, 5.

Western border of Romania, it is probable that the Iași school underwent the same transition. However, the reasoning for the move likely different between the two schools. While for Iași the reason was likely wartime destruction in 1944, for Cluj, it had already been evacuated likely as a consequence of the Vienna Award in 1940[102]. Although the situation seemed to correlate with the ongoing events, the war itself was not the cause. This issue had been present from the very beginning of the Foundation's fellowship program for Romanian nurses and was reported consistently. As early as 1926, during her Romanian visit, Crowell noted in her diary that nurses received meagre salaries, even when board and lodging were provided. This extremely low pay underscored the deep undervaluation of the nursing profession, as nurses' wages amounted to roughly half of what local domestic servants earned[103]. But salaries were not the only conundrum Cluj nurses faced when returning from Arad. When the nursing school returned in August 1945, Criste informed the Rockefeller Foundation that all teaching materials were lost and difficult to replace, requesting help from the Red Cross or the Foundation[104]. By March 1946, the school sustained severe damage, and as repair work began, recruiting students proved challenging because nurses' salaries were very low. The records note that the school partnered with the Red Cross during the war and was evacuated to Arad, which was probably the city previously not mentioned. The personnel remained healthy and continued their work with enthusiasm[105]. According to an announcement published in the Iași daily *Opinia (The Opinion)*, in mid-to-late October, the Amicii tinerelor fete (Friends of Young Girls) charity, also led by Costres, resumed activities in its previous location, the building in the courtyard of the Annunciation Church in Iași, initially with forty beds and mattresses from the Red Cross[106].

On 23 August 1944, King Michael I removed Antonescu, ended Romania's alliance with the Axis powers and allowed Soviet forces to

[102] Ibid, 2.
[103] Crowell, *Diary. 1926*, "Jan. 24th – Bucharest", 2–3.
[104] *Costres*, 2.
[105] Ibid, 5.
[106] 'Informații', *Opinia*, 31 October 1946, 3.

enter the country. Between 1945 and 1948, as Romania moved from a brief respite after extreme right-wing rule to the new People's Republic, political upheaval disrupted many areas of civil society, including healthcare, even though pro-Western views remained common. Under Soviet pressure, this transition produced a Communist-dominated government in March 1945, rigged elections in November 1946 and the forced abdication of the king on 30 December 1947, when the People's Republic of Romania was declared[107]. In the newly formed republic, the Ministry of Education was granted full authority to close foreign schools, emphasising that affected Romanian citizens, whether teachers or students, could transfer to state schools[108]. This decision was part of a broader initiative, coupled with measures to nationalise churches and communities tied to educational establishments[109], followed by additional sectors, including pharmacies and medical laboratories[110]. Even more, private institutions were expropriated and designated as

[107] Dennis Deletant, *Romania Under Communist Rule*, 2nd ed. (Iași and Portland: Center for Romanian Studies in cooperation with the Civic Academy Foundation, 1999), 30–51.

[108] Ministerul Învățământului, „Decret nr. 159 din 22 iulie 1948 referitor la școlile străine din Republica Populară Română," Monitorul Oficial al Republicii Populare Române, July 22, 1948, Monitorul Juridic, http://www.monitoruljuridic.ro/act/decret-nr-159-din-22-iulie-1948-referitor-la-scolile-straine-din-republica-populara-romana-emitent-ministerul-invatamantului-publicat-n-35193.html, accessed 14 December 2025.

[109] Ministerul Învățământului, „Decret nr. 176 din 2 august 1948 pentru trecerea în proprietatea Statului a Bunurilor bisericilor congregațiilor, comunităților sau particularilor, ce au servit pentru funcționarea și întreținerea instituțiilor de învățământ general, tehnic sau profesional (Text corectat conform rectificării apărută în Monitorul Oficial Nr. 204 din 3 Septemvrie 1948)" Monitorul Oficial al Republicii Populare Române, August 3, 1948, Monitorul Juridic, http://www.monitoruljuridic.ro/act/decret-nr-176-din-2-august-1948-pentru-trecerea-in-proprietatea-statului-a-bunurilor-bisericilor-congregatiilor-comunitatilor-sau-particularilor-ce-au-servit-pentru-functionarea-si-intretinerea-institutiilor-de-invatamant-19336.html, accessed 14 December 2025.

[110] Prezidiul Marii Adunări Naționale, „DECRET nr. 134 din 2 aprilie 1949 pentru naționalizarea unităților sanitare ca: farmaciile urbane reședințe și nereședințe de județ și centre importante muncitorești, laboratoare chimico-farmaceutice, drogherii medicinale și laboratoare de analize medicale," in *Buletinul Oficial al Republicii Populare Române, no. 15 bis*, Buletinul Oficial al Republicii Populare Române, May 2, 1949, Monitorul Juridic, http://www.monitoruljuridic.ro/act/decret-nr-176-din-2-august-1948-pentru-trecerea-in-proprietatea-statului-a-bunurilor-bisericilor-congregatiilor-comunitatilor-sau-particularilor-ce-au-servit-pentru-functionarea-si-intretinerea-institutiilor-de-invatamant-19336.html, accessed 14 December 2025.

public utilities[111]. Cluj, like the rest of Romania, became part of this new mechanism, implementing the Semashko system, financed through the state budget and subject to government oversight via a centralised planning apparatus. A key aspect of this system was the state monopoly on health services, which the government owned. Health personnel were salaried officials, and the population had equal access to these services[112]. After Romania's 1989 Revolution, this system gradually evolved into a more pluralistic, decentralised network. Still, the plight of nurses regarding staffing levels, remuneration, and working hours echoes the interwar situation and remains a pressing concern in the twenty-first century[113].

Despite the change of regime in 1948, Romanian eugenics and anthropology continued in altered form and shifted from racial concerns to national health, while nurses remained marginalised. The new state centralised education and health through nationalisation measures between 1948 and 1949, closed foreign schools, expropriated medical institutions, and introduced the Semashko health system, based on state ownership, salaried staff, and universal access. This system lasted until partial decentralisation after 1989, while nurses continued to face chronic shortages and poor working conditions. But this did not fully curtail communication between Romania and the democratic West. After the Communist takeover, the Rockefeller Foundation continued to monitor former fellows through administrative records, which reported demotions and the marginalisation of Western-trained professionals as

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[111] See Ministerul Sănătății, „Decret nr. 164 din 30 iulie 1948 pentru declararea de utilitate publică și expropriere a Sanatoriului Dr. Antoniu, situat în București, str. Arh. Mincu Nr. 7", Monitorul Oficial al Republicii Populare Române, July 30, 1948, Monitorul Juridic, http://www.monitoruljuridic.ro/act/decret-nr-164-din-30-iulie-1948-pentru-declararea-de-utilitate-publica-si-expropriere-a-sanatoriului-dr-antoniu-situat-in-bucuresti-str-arh-mincu-nr-7-35195.html, accessed 14 December 2025.

[112] Oana Miron, „O radiografie a sistemului de sănătate din România (A radiography of the health system in Romania)," *Polis – Revistă de Științe Politice*, New Series, VIII, no. 1 (27) (2019): 1, http://revistapolis.ro/documente/revista/2020/1(27)/Oana%20Miron-converted.pdf, accessed 14 December 2025.

[113] Cristian Vladescu and Victor Olsavsky, "Migration of Nurses: The Case of Romania", *Management in Health* XIII, no. 4 (2009): 12–16, https://doi.org/10.5233/mih.2009.0026.

institutions came under state control. One example was the reassignment of Eugenia Manoliu's husband, E. M. Alexa to a sanitary high school in Iași in 1950[114]. Furthermore, an update of Maria Secrier's card was added as late as 1967[115] showed another example of continued institutional interest in Rockefeller fellows' careers after 1948. This demonstrates a continued effort on the part of the Foundation to follow-up on their contacts in Romania, despite the abrupt and adversarial change of regime.

Conclusion

The professional journeys of Romanian nurses who developed their skills and expertise in modern nursing as Rockefeller Fellows highlight Cluj's crucial role in advancing nursing in Romania. After completing their fellowships, these nurses became educators and practitioners, aiming to mentor new generations and shaping the field's future. These nursing fellows, who were trained at leading European and North American medical centres before returning to Cluj and other major urban medical centres, alongside Iași and Bucharest, were instrumental in introducing modern nursing education tasked with providing hospitals with qualified practitioners and advancing nursing knowledge throughout the Romanian medical system. Their dedicated efforts educated generations of nurses, markedly improving nursing education and practice nationwide, with Cluj serving as a central hub alongside Iași and Bucharest. As Romania became increasingly entrenched in a Stalinist authoritarian system after the Second World War, its political isolation contrasted with developments in non-Communist Europe, where nursing education continued to modernise based on interwar Rockefeller Foundation models. In Romania, although the Communist regime adopted the Soviet Semashko model of centralised healthcare, earlier Rockefeller-supported structures did not disappear but were reshaped under state control. Analysis of Rockefeller Foundation records, Romanian official documents, and contemporary press sources shows

[114] *Manoliu*, 5.
[115] *Secrier*, 1.

that pedagogical methods and leadership models introduced by Rockefeller-trained professionals continued to influence nursing education and public health practice, making this intersection of Western philanthropy and socialist state medicine a particularly fertile ground for future research into medical professionalisation, gendered labour, and transnational knowledge transfer during the Cold War and beyond.

Annexes

Table 1. ***Common abbreviations connected to the Rockefeller Foundation relevant to this paper***

Type	Abbreviation	Meaning
Institution	RF	Rockefeller Foundation
Funding Departments	DME	Division of Medical Education
	IHB	International Health Board (before 1927)
	IHD	International Health Division (after 1927)
	MS	Medical Sciences
Officers	FEC	Frances Elisabeth Crowell
	GKS	George King Strode
	MB	Mary Beard
	MET	Mary Elizabeth Tennant

Table 2. ***Rockefeller Fellowship Types and Numbers for interwar Romanian women medical professionals***

Department	**Number of fellowships**
IHB/IHD Nursing	8
MS Nursing	6
DME, Nurse DME, Nurse Visitor	2
IHD	1

Table 3. ***Studies and activities during fellowships with at least 2 mentions in Rockefeller Fellowship Cards for interwar Romanian women medical professionals***

Subject	Number of mentions
Public Health Nursing	8
English, Hospital Work	5
Nursing Education (includes teaching and administration of nursing schools)	3
Paediatrics Nursing, Hospital Visits	2

Table 4. ***Total payments for fixed total/stipend for nursing fellows mentioned here***

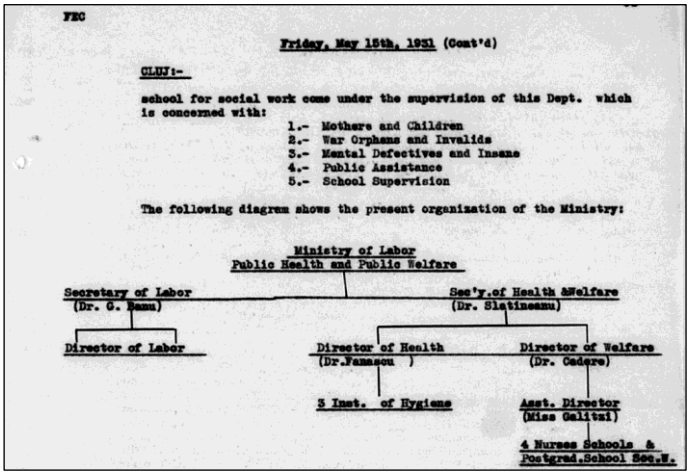
Fellow	Grant Total (Approx.)		
	Start Year		2025
Maria Pertia	1934	$2,500	$60,443
Eugenia Zimita Costres	1927	$2,366	$44,053
Anna Lucia Cumpata, Maria Secrier, Valeria Tarina	1929	$1,680	$31,829
Smaranda Botez (second fellowship)	1937	$500	$11,249
Maria Criste (second fellowship)	1932	$120	$ 2,838

Table 5. ***Average Payments for fellowship granting $40 or $120 stipends per fellow mentioned here***

Fellow	Grant Total (Approx.)		
	Start Year		2025
Eugenia Popa	1934	$2,000	$48,355
Smaranda Botez	1937	$1,840	$41,397
Elise Bucsan (first fellowship)	1929	$1,840	$34,861
Maria Criste (first fellowship)	1927	$1,040	$19,364
Anny Lambrino	1931		$22,167
Alexandrina Ionescu, Maria Moiseev	1937		$23,398
Aurora Sutianu		$880	$19,799

Images

Fig. 1. ***A class of nursing students from the Public Health Nursing School in Cluj in 1929, photo edited in original document***[116]



FEC

Friday, May 15th, 1931 (Cont'd)

CLUJ:-

school for social work come under the supervision of this Dept. which is concerned with:

1.- Mothers and Children
2.- War Orphans and Invalids
3.- Mental Defectives and Insane
4.- Public Assistance
5.- School Supervision

The following diagram shows the present organization of the Ministry:

Ministry of Labor
Public Health and Public Welfare

Secretary of Labor (Dr. C. Banu) — See'y.of Health &Welfare (Dr. Slatineanu)

Director of Labor

Director of Health (Dr.Fanasou) — Director of Welfare (Dr. Cadere)

5 Inst. of Hygiene

Asst. Director (Miss Gelitzi)

4 Nurses Schools & Postgrad.School Soc.W.

Fig 2. ***Organizational chart of the Ministry of Labor, Public Health, and Public Welfare in May 1931, showing the administrative hierarchy from the ministerial level to the Department of Welfare and its supervision of nursing and social work schools as outlined by Elisabeth Crowell (FEC)***[117]

[116] The Rockefeller Foundation, *Annual Report. 1929* (Rockefeller Foundation Records, 1929), Rockefeller Foundation records/Annual Reports Collection/1929, 200.

[117] Crowell, *Diary. 1931*, 93.

Fig 3. ***Portrait of Elisabeth Crowell (FEC), circa 1905***[118]

Fig. 4. ***Portrait of George Strode (GKS), between 1941 and 1950***[119]

[118] *Portraits-Crowell, F. Elisabeth*, c1905, Rockefeller Archive Center, Photographs, Series 100-1000/International, Series 100/Portraits.

[119] *Portraits-Strode, George K.*, between 1941 and 1950, Photograph, Rockefeller Archive Center, Photographs, Series 100-1000/International, Series 100/Portraits.

Nursing Education in Cluj with Rockefeller Foundation Support, 1924-1948

Școlile de asistență medicală susținute de Fundația Rockefeller, 1924-1948

Sonia-Doris Andraș

Abstract: This paper examines the support from the Rockefeller Foundation to women and nursing educational institutions in Cluj, Transylvania, between 1924 and 1948. It follows developments from the tumultuous period spanning Greater Romania's consolidation, wartime upheavals, shifting borders and the postwar path to the People's Republic of Romania. The research focuses on Romanian nurses and educators who were Rockefeller Fellows, as well as those who received specialised training in Cluj before the Communist takeover and the subsequent restructuring of medical education in 1948. The analysis identifies Bucharest, Cluj and Iași as the three major centres in the development of modern Romanian nursing education. By examining the Rockefeller Foundation's diverse support for Cluj-based nurses, educators, educational facilities and materials, this paper shows how the Foundation advanced modern nursing education through changing political regimes, administrative reforms and ideological shifts until the new Communist authorities cut off communications across the Atlantic. The study also discusses how prejudices about women's abilities and roles in medical science shaped healthcare policy, with particular emphasis on the Cluj context. It analyses the relationship between international assistance for medical education and Romanian reactions to explain the evolving status of nurses and shifts in gender relations during this turbulent era. The research uses an interdisciplinary approach, drawing on fellowship records, reports, diaries, and observations from Rockefeller Foundation officers alongside Romanian national and Cluj-based publications. Special attention is given to the use of themes like health, beauty, and fashion in propaganda that shaped women's roles, using the Cluj nursing education model to illustrate these dynamics. The aim is to highlight the careers of Romanian female medical professionals with Rockefeller Foundation connections, demonstrating Cluj's pivotal role in modernising Romania's nursing system. It contributes to Romanian studies by establishing theoretical and practical foundations for future research in medical history and related fields, emphasising the significance of Cluj-based Rockefeller Fellow nurses, their schools, hospitals and students.
Key Words: Rockefeller Foundation, nursing, Cluj, women, gender, medicine, Transylvania, Romania

Rezumat: Acest studiu examinează sprijinul material și academic acordat de Fundația Rockefeller instituțiilor de educație și formare în domeniul asistenței medicale pentru femeile din Cluj între 1924 și 1948, urmărind evoluțiile unei perioade marcate de transformări profunde, de la consolidarea României Mari și reformele interbelice la traumele celui de-al Doilea Război Mondial, schimbările de frontieră și tranziția postbelică spre Republica Populară Română. Cercetarea se referă în special la evoluția bursierelor Rockefeller din România în calitate de cadre medicale și didactice, concentrându-se pe cele au activat la Cluj până la instaurarea regimului comunist și restructurarea educației medicale din 1948. Studiul tratează cazul particular al școlilor de asistente din Cluj în comparație cu echivalentelor lor din București și Iași, cele trei centre majore ale modernizării domeniului asistenței medicale. Prin analiza sprijinului oferit de Fundația Rockefeller pentru asistente, profesoare, infrastructură educațională și materiale didactice, studiul evidențiază modul în care Fundația a contribuit la profesionalizarea formării elitelor medicale feminine în pofida schimbărilor politice și ideologice care au dus la întreruperea comunicațiilor transatlantice. Cercetarea explorează impactul prejudecăților privind rolurile femeilor în științele medicale asupra politicilor de sănătate. Se examinează interacțiunile dintre actorii internaționali și și cei locali, precum și reacțiile instituționale față de modernizare și promovarea femeilor în domeniul asistenței medicale. Scopul este de a explica evoluția statutului asistentelor medicale și transformările relațiilor de gen. Bazată pe o abordare interdisciplinară și pe surse variate, de la fișe de bursieri și rapoarte ale Fundației Rockefeller la publicații românești naționale și clujene, cercetarea evidențiază carierele asistentelor medicale române sprijinite de Fundația Rockefeller și rolul central al Clujului în modernizarea asistenței medicale, oferind totodată fundamente teoretice și metodologice pentru studii viitoare în istoria medicinei și domenii conexe.
Cuvinte cheie: Fundația Rockefeller, asistență medicală, Cluj, femei, gen, medicină, Transilvania, România

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